



SARC Reporting Element for School Facilities Clarified

For many years, the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) has included a reporting element for the “safety, cleanliness, and adequacy of school facilities.” This requirement, which is contained in *Education Code* Section 33126(b)(9), has been a SARC element since California voters approved Proposition 98 in 1988. Data or narrative for this element are to be provided by the local educational agency (LEA).

In implementing the settlement agreement in the case of *Williams, et al. v. State of California, et al.*, Senate Bill (SB) 550 (Chapter 900, Statutes of 2004) recently mandated that the SARC section on school facility conditions include information about “any needed maintenance to ensure good repair.” SB 550 defined “good repair” to mean that “the facility is maintained in a manner that assures that it is clean, safe, and functional as determined pursuant to an interim evaluation instrument developed by the Office of Public School Construction.” The interim evaluation instrument became available for use in late January 2005.

At its meetings in November 2004 and January 2005, the State Board of Education (SBE) incorporated this expanded reporting element for the condition of school facilities into the 2003-04 SARC template. The SBE also adopted a revised data definition for this reporting element that included examples of summary statements that could or should not be used to report on the condition of school facilities.

Recognizing that school sites are not required to complete the interim evaluation instrument until the 2005-06 school year, the SBE also directed that for SARCs published during the 2004-05 school year, schools are to be asked to report on whether any of the eight emergency facilities needs specified in *Education Code* Section 17592.72(c)(1) exist at the school site. The eight emergency facilities needs are: (1) gas leaks; (2) nonfunctioning heating, ventilation, fire sprinklers, or air-conditioning systems; (3) electrical power failure; (4) major sewer line stoppage; (5) major pest or vermin infestation; (6) broken windows or exterior doors or gates that will not lock

and that pose a security risk; (7) abatement of hazardous materials previously undiscovered that pose an immediate threat to pupil or staff; and (8) structural damage creating a hazardous or uninhabitable condition.

For SARCs published during the 2004-05 school year, LEAs should at a minimum (1) identify any emergency facilities needs at the school site and describe how these needs have been addressed; (2) use some of the acceptable summary statements as a guide for providing current, relevant information on the condition of the school's facilities; and (3) summarize the most significant results from any inspection of the school site conducted using the interim evaluation instrument.

In recent weeks, the CDE has had numerous discussions about the expanded school facilities reporting element with state education and school facilities officials as well as with LEA staff. The purpose of these discussions is to gather information that can eventually lead to proposed revisions in the SARC template and data definitions to clarify the requirements and provide for more effective reporting on the condition of school facilities. These revisions will ultimately be presented to the SBE in May 2005 as part of the proposed 2004-05 SARC template and data definitions.

SARC Requirements Expanded to Nonpublic, Nonsectarian Schools

Effective January 1, 2005, all nonpublic nonsectarian schools are required to prepare a SARC in accordance with *Education Code* Section 33126. This new requirement was added by Assembly Bill (AB) 1858 (Chapter 914, Statutes of 2004), which was signed by the Governor on September 29, 2004. Nonpublic, nonsectarian schools, some of which are located outside of California, contract with LEAs to provide an appropriate educational program for certain special education students and foster youth. To assist these schools in the implementation of this new requirement, the CDE sent a letter to the schools that notifies them about the SARC requirement contained in AB 1858 and informs them about the wealth of information available on the [SARC Web page](#) on the CDE Web site.

SARC Data Definitions Reorganized

The [Data Element Definitions and Sources 2003-04](#) that support the SARC model template recently underwent a reorganization intended to improve clarity and readability. The data definitions, which previously were published in a three-column table format, are now published individually on separate pages. In addition, a document containing all the definitions is available for downloading in both *PDF* and *Text* formats.

Suggested Changes to 2004-05 SARC Template and Data Definitions Considered

The CDE appreciates the submission of suggested changes to the 2004-05 SARC template and data definitions in response to the solicitation for suggestions in the February 2005 edition of the *SARCnews*. In addition to considering these suggested changes, the CDE is also seeking feedback from a variety of state officials and educational organizations. The resulting proposed changes in the 2004-05 SARC template and data definitions will be presented to the SBE for its consideration in May 2005. If approved, the changes would be implemented for SARCs published in the 2005-06 school year.

SARC Question of the Month Feature Introduced

As a new feature in the *SARCnews*, the following is the “SARC Question of the Month” along with the answer:

Q. Which four tables in the SARC template are not mandatory reporting elements?

A. The four tables in the SARC template that are not mandatory reporting elements are “Contact Information” (untitled and located near the beginning of the template); “School Description and Mission Statement”; “Student Enrollment, by Grade Level”; and “Student Enrollment, by Ethnic Group.”

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